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CLAIMS:

What is claimed is:

- 5 1. A method for entering messages into a database, the method comprising:
- receiving a message from a user by means of one of a plurality of allowable communication devices;
- entering the message into a designated account in
- 10 the database; and
- storing the message in a uniform storage format specified for the account, wherein the uniform storage format is independent of a data format used by the communication device.
- 15 2. The method according to claim 1, wherein the allowable communication devices include:
- telephone;
- mobile telephone;
- 20 computer
- PDA; and
- pager.
3. The method according to claim 1, further comprising
- 25 requesting personal identification information from the user, wherein the information is used to verify access rights to the database.
4. The method according to claim 1, wherein the message
- 30 entered into the database is a voice message.

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5. The method according to claim 1, wherein the message entered into the database is a text message.

6. The method according to claim 1, wherein the uniform
5 storage format specified for the database account may be one of the following:

MP3;
wave file;
AU;
10 WMA; and
Real Audio.

7. A method for retrieving messages from a database, the method comprising:

15 receiving a message-retrieval request from a user by means of one of a plurality of allowable communication devices;

retrieving the requested message from a designated account in the database, wherein the message is stored in
20 a uniform storage format specified for the account;

converting the message contents from the uniform storage format to a data format compatible with the communication device; and

25 conveying the message contents to the user.

8. The method according to claim 7, wherein the allowable communication devices include:

telephone;
mobile telephone;
30 computer
PDA; and

pager.

9. The method according to claim 7, further comprising requesting personal identification information from the user, wherein the information is used to verify access rights to the database.

10. The method according to claim 7, wherein the message retrieved from the database is a voice message.

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11. The method according to claim 7, wherein the message retrieved from the database is a text message.

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12. The method according to claim 7, wherein the uniform storage format specified for the database account may be one of the following:

MP3;

wave file;

AU;

20

WMA; and

Real Audio.

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13. A computer program product in a computer readable medium for use in a data processing system, for entering messages into a database, the computer program product comprising:

instructions for receiving a message from a user by means of one of a plurality of allowable communication devices;

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instructions for entering the message into a designated account in the database; and

instructions for storing the message in a uniform

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storage format specified for the account, wherein the uniform storage format is independent of a data format used by the communication device.

- 5 14. The computer program product according to claim 13, wherein the allowable communication devices include:

telephone;
mobile telephone;
computer
10 PDA; and
pager.

- 15 15. The computer program product according to claim 13, further comprising instructions for requesting personal identification information from the user, wherein the information is used to verify access rights to the database.

- 20 16. The computer program product according to claim 13, wherein the message entered into the database is a voice message.

- 25 17. The computer program product according to claim 13, wherein the message entered into the database is a text message.

18. The computer program product according to claim 13, wherein the uniform storage format specified for the database account may be one of the following:

30 MP3;
wave file;

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AU;

WMA; and

Real Audio.

- 5 19. A computer program product in a computer readable medium for use in a data processing system, for retrieving messages from a database, the computer program product comprising:

instructions for receiving a message-retrieval
10 request from a user by means of one of a plurality of allowable communication devices;

instructions for retrieving the requested message from a designated account in the database, wherein the message is stored in a uniform storage format specified
15 for the account;

instructions for converting the message contents from the uniform storage format to a data format compatible with the communication device; and

instructions for conveying the message contents to
20 the user.

20. The computer program product according to claim 19, wherein the allowable communication devices include:

telephone;
25 mobile telephone;
computer
PDA;
pager; and
palm computer

- 30 21. The computer program product according to claim 19, further comprising instructions for requesting personal

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identification information from the user, wherein the information is used to verify access rights to the database.

5 22. The computer program product according to claim 19, wherein the message retrieved from the database is a voice message.

10 23. The computer program product according to claim 19, wherein the message retrieved from the database is a text message.

15 24. The computer program product according to claim 19, wherein the uniform storage format specified for the database account may be one of the following:

MP3;
wave file;
AU;
WMA; and
20 Real Audio.

25 25. A system for entering messages into a database, the system comprising:

a receiver adapted to receive a message from a user
25 by means of one of a plurality of allowable communication devices;

a filing component adapted to enter the message into a designated account in the database; and

30 a storage component adapted to store the message in a uniform storage format specified for the account, wherein the uniform storage format is independent of a data format used by the communication device.

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26. A system for retrieving messages from a database, the system comprising:

5 a receiver adapted to receive a message-retrieval request from a user by means of one of a plurality of allowable communication devices;

a retrieving component adapted to retrieve the requested message from a designated account in the database, wherein the message is stored in a uniform storage format specified for the account;

10 a conversion component adapted to convert the message contents from the uniform storage format to a data format compatible with the communication device; and

a conveyance component adapted to convey the message contents to the user.

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